United Nations A/AC.109/2015/15

General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 March 2015
English
Original: French

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

New Caledonia

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

Contents

		Page
	The Territory at a glance	3
I.	Constitutional, political and legal issues	5
II.	Budget	9
III.	Economic conditions	10
	A. General	10
	B. Mineral resources	10
	C. Construction and manufacturing	11
	D. Agriculture and fisheries	11
	E. Transport and communications	12
	F. Tourism and environment	13
IV.	Social conditions	14
	A. General	14
	B. Employment	16

Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 8 January 2015. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

15-04627 (E) 090415 100415

Please recycle

C. Education 17
D. Health care 18
V. Relations with international organizations and partners 19
VI. Position of the administering Power 20
VII. Consideration of the question by the United Nations 21
A. Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples 21
B. Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) 22
C. Action taken by the General Assembly 22

The Territory at a glance

Territory: New Caledonia is a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations. It is administered by France. New Caledonia is defined as a French overseas sui generis community under the French Constitution and has enhanced autonomy.

Representative of administering Power: Mr. Vincent Bouvier, French High Commissioner (since 18 August 2014).

Geography: Located in the Pacific Ocean, about 1,500 km east of Australia and 1,700 km north of New Zealand. It comprises one large island, known as Grande Terre, and smaller islands known as the Loyalty Islands, the Bélep Archipelago, the Isle of Pines and the Huon Islands. There are also several uninhabited islands to the north of the Loyalty Islands.

Land area: 18,575 km² (the Territory as a whole); 16,750 km² (Grande Terre).

Exclusive economic zone: 1,422,543 km².

Population: 268,767 (2014 census).

Life expectancy at birth: 80.4 years for women and 74 years for men.

Ethnic composition: 40.3 per cent Melanesians, mainly Kanaks; 29.2 per cent persons of European origin, mainly French; 8.7 per cent Wallisians and Futunians; 2 per cent Tahitians; 1.6 per cent Indonesians; 1 per cent Vietnamese; 0.9 per cent Vanuatuans; and 16.2 per cent populations classified by the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies as "others".

Languages: The official language is French. About 27 Kanak vernacular languages are spoken in geographically distinct regions.

Capital: Nouméa, located in the south of Grande Terre.

Head of territorial Government: Ms. Cynthia Ligeard (since June 2014).

Main political parties: The Congress includes five political groups as a result of the 2014 provincial elections. The three anti-independence groups are Calédonie ensemble, Front pour l'unité (consisting of Rassemblement-UMP, Avenir ensemble, Mouvement de la diversité and Mouvement démocrate) and Union pour la Calédonie dans la France (consisting of Mouvement populaire calédonien, Rassemblement pour la Calédonie and Mouvement républicain calédonien). The two pro-independence groups are UC-FLNKS et nationalistes (Union calédonienne-Front de libération nationale kanak socialiste, Union calédonienne, Union pour construire les Loyauté, Dynamique unitaire Sud and Parti travailliste) and UNI-Palika (Union nationale pour l'indépendance-Parti de libération kanak).

Elections: The most recent elections were held on 23 and 30 March 2014 (municipal) and 11 May 2014 (provincial).

Legislature: Congress of New Caledonia.

Gross domestic product per capita: $34,262.

Unemployment rate: 14 per cent (total unemployed as a percentage of the workforce in 2011).

Economy: Mining industry (notably nickel), construction and tourism.

Monetary unit: CFP franc.

Brief history: In 1774, the British captain James Cook discovered Grande Terre and named it "New Caledonia". France annexed New Caledonia on 24 September 1853. In 1942, the United States of America chose New Caledonia for its military base in the Pacific. Some 20,000 New Zealand soldiers were stationed in New Caledonia during the Second World War. In 1946, France made New Caledonia an overseas Territory with limited autonomy. In the 1970s, supporters of independence were highly active, leading to violence during the 1980s known as the "*événements*" (events). In 1988, the Matignon Accords led to the establishment of three provinces with the aim of restoring the balance of power. Some 10 years later, in 1998, the Nouméa Accord planned for the progressive autonomy of the Territory. A referendum on whether New Caledonia should assume full sovereignty will be held between 2014 and 2018, but may not be held in the last six months of the term of office of the current Congress of New Caledonia. The Congress has until the end of May 2018 to request the administering Power, by a three-fifths majority of its members, to hold the referendum. After that time, the date will be set by the administering Power between May and November 2018

I. Constitutional, political and legal issues

1. New Caledonia is a sui generis community within the French Republic, governed under part XIII of the Constitution ("Transitional provisions pertaining to New Caledonia"). The French Minister for Overseas Territories, Ms. George Pau-Langevin, has responsibility for New Caledonia, and in this regard ensures the coordination and implementation of the French Government's actions in accordance with the Territory's status and organization. The administering Power is represented in the Territory by a High Commissioner, who exercises the authority of the French Republic in New Caledonia. This position is currently held by Mr. Vincent Bouvier. Under the Organic Law of 19 March 1999 concerning New Caledonia, the administering Power retains prerogatives in a number of areas, including diplomacy, immigration and aliens, currency, the Treasury, trade, defence, justice and maintenance of law and order. In the area of defence, the High Commissioner performs functions prescribed by the relevant legislation. The High Commissioner may declare a state of emergency as provided for under the relevant legislation; he or she must refer the matter to the Minister for Overseas Territories after informing the Government of New Caledonia. Under the territorial structure, the Office of the High Commissioner in the Territory is the seat of the defence sector of New Caledonia. Just over 2,200 French military personnel, including members of the gendarmerie, are stationed in the Territory.

2. The Territory is part of the metropolitan French judicial system, with some special features such as the obligation to use customary judges in cases involving disputes between persons with customary civil status. The Court of Appeal is located in the capital, Nouméa. Appeals on points of law can be filed with the Court of Cassation in metropolitan France.

3. The Kanak independence movement was launched in the 1970s in response to the process of decolonization in Africa and increasing French migratory flows. In 1984, the Front de libération nationale kanak socialiste (FLNKS) was founded as an umbrella organization for the pro-independence parties, and later that year it established a provisional independent Government. Between 1984 and 1988, about 80 people died in violent confrontations between pro- and anti-independence elements. The violence was eventually halted with the conclusion of the Matignon Accords on 26 June 1988 between FLNKS, the loyalist Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République (RPCR) and the Government of France.

4. The Matignon Accords provided for greater local autonomy and substantial aid designed to redress deep inequalities between the French and Kanak communities, while committing the Territory to a self-determination referendum 10 years later. Following negotiations initiated in the 1990s, the pro- and anti-independence camps concluded the Nouméa Accord in 1998, redefining the Territory's status. The agreement steered a middle course between the respective political aspirations of RPCR and FLNKS and avoided the need for a referendum on independence, which, according to the administering Power and in the circumstances prevailing at that time, probably would have caused tensions to flare. It was signed on 5 May 1998 and approved by 72 per cent of New Caledonians in a referendum held on 8 November 1998. The Accord was subsequently ratified by the National Assembly and the Senate of France. New Caledonia is now defined as a French overseas sui generis community under the French Constitution and has enhanced autonomy.

5. Section 1.5 of the Nouméa Accord provides that: "The identifying signs of the country, such as its name, flag, anthem, motto and banknote designs, shall be jointly devised in order to express both the Kanak identity and the future to be shared by all". On 18 August 2010, the Congress of New Caledonia approved three out of five identifying signs around which New Caledonia could unite — an anthem, a motto and banknote designs — but failed to agree on a name and a flag. On 13 July 2010, the territorial Congress expressed the wish that the Kanak flag and the French flag should fly together in New Caledonia. This wish has no binding legal force; each local authority remains free to apply it or not. On 17 July 2010, the Prime Minister, François Fillon, on an official visit to the islands, raised the Kanak flag and the French flag together for the first time at the headquarters of the French High Commissioner, in the presence of local authorities. The new banknotes bearing the designs expressing the Kanak identity were issued on 20 January 2014.

6. The Nouméa Accord commits France to transferring responsibility for certain areas of government, except sovereign powers, to the Government of New Caledonia between 1998 and 2018. A referendum on whether New Caledonia should assume full sovereignty will be held between 2014 and 2018, but may not be held in the last six months of the term of office of the current Congress of New Caledonia. The Congress has until the end of May 2018 to request the administering Power, by a three-fifths majority of its members (33 members), to hold the referendum on the assumption of full sovereignty. After that time, the date will be set by the administering Power between May and November 2018. Eligible participants will be asked to vote on three issues: the transfer of sovereign powers to New Caledonia, access to an international status of full responsibility and the organization of citizenship by nationality. Should independence be rejected, a second referendum may be held at the request of one third of the members of Congress (19 members). If independence is again rejected, a third referendum may be held under the same conditions. If the response is still negative, the parties to the Accord will meet to consider the situation thus created. The full text of the Nouméa Accord is contained in the 1998 working paper (A/AC.109/2114, annex).

7. New Caledonia has a 54-member Congress drawn from the elected membership of the three provincial assemblies (15 of the 22 members of the North Province assembly, 32 of the 40 members of the South Province assembly and 7 of the 14 members of the Loyalty Islands Province assembly).

8. The territorial Government, elected by and answerable to the Congress, constitutes the executive branch in New Caledonia and is headed by a President. The Nouméa Accord stipulates that the Government, as a collegial body, must proportionally reflect party representation in the Congress. The President is elected by a majority vote of all members of the Government.

9. In accordance with the Nouméa Accord, a parallel set of institutions was established to accommodate full political recognition of the Kanak identity. There are eight customary councils representing eight customary regions. In addition, a Territory-wide customary Senate with a rotating presidency comprises 16 members, with 2 members selected by each customary council. The customary Senate is consulted by the executive and legislative bodies of New Caledonia on matters related directly to the Kanak identity. The customary Senate has a budget for its operations (art. 147 of the Organic Law, Act No. 99-209 of 19 March 1999).

10. Political parties in New Caledonia are divided between those favouring New Caledonia's remaining part of France and those favouring independence, with a number of nuances within each position. The 2014 election resulted in a Congress of 29 anti-independence and 25 pro-independence members. The anti-independence groups currently represented in Congress are Calédonie ensemble (CE), with 15 seats; Front pour l'unité (FPU), with 8 seats; and Union pour la Calédonie dans la France (UCF), with 6 seats. The pro-independence groups represented in Congress are Union calédonienne-FLNKS (UC-FLNKS) et nationalistes, with 15 seats; Union nationale pour l'indépendance and Parti de libération kanak (UNI-Palika), with 9 seats; and Ligue kanake socialiste (LKS), with 1 seat. Mr. Gaël Yanno (UCF) was elected President of the Congress on 19 May 2014, succeeding Mr. Roch Wamytan (Union calédonienne).

11. The thirteenth Government, elected by the Congress on the basis of a proportional system, comprised 11 members. It consisted of six members of the anti-independence groups (CE, FPU and UCF) and five members of the pro-independence Union calédonienne (UC) and UNI-Palika. Ms. Cynthia Ligeard (FPU) was elected President. As a result of the mass resignation of Calédonie ensemble members, the Government collapsed on 15 December 2014. A new Government was elected on 31 December 2014, but its members were unable to take office owing to their failure to elect a President and Vice-President. Under these circumstances, the former Government continues to act in a caretaker capacity.

12. There are several different electorates in New Caledonia: (a) the general electorate, consisting of those eligible to vote in French municipal, legislative and presidential elections and in European elections; (b) a special, more restricted electorate consisting of those eligible to vote in elections to Congress and the provincial assemblies, with the limitation being justified by the need to restrict the right to vote in such elections to the population deemed to be directly concerned, given its link to the Territory; and (c) a special electorate consisting of those eligible to participate in the final status referendums under the Nouméa Accord. This electorate, which differs slightly from the preceding one, has yet to be established. According to the administering Power, it will consist, generally speaking, of persons who are able to prove that they have resided in New Caledonia for at least 20 years, Kanaks with customary status and persons born in New Caledonia whose property and personal ties are mainly in the Territory.

13. Since 1999, the composition of the electorate for provincial elections has been a subject of intense political and legal debate between supporters of independence and advocates of keeping New Caledonia within the French Republic (see A/AC.109/2014/20/Rev.1). Every year, the special electoral rolls of voters eligible to participate in the election of members of Congress and the assemblies are updated by special administrative commissions headed by magistrates. Each commission also includes a representative of the Administration appointed by the French High Commissioner, a representative of the mayor of the municipality and two representatives of voters in the municipality (one pro- and one anti-independence). Decisions are taken by majority vote. New Caledonians also vote in the French presidential elections and elect two members of the French Senate and two members of the French National Assembly.

14. The administering Power reports that, as a guarantor of the Nouméa Accord, it sought to ensure the fairness of the provincial elections of 11 May 2014. The following steps were taken:

(a) As early as April 2013, a working group comprising representatives of all political groups met to discuss the revision of the special electoral roll for the provincial elections. As a result of the meeting, access to the general electoral roll for 1998 (given that the supplementary roll provided for by law had never been drawn up) was granted, after years of demands for recognition of the right to such access;

(b) In 2014, the number of magistrates presiding over the special administrative commissions was increased in view of the fact that voter representatives can now challenge registrations they consider to be unwarranted, provided that they produce evidence to that effect;

(c) The administering Power accepted the visiting mission of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in order to enable it to verify, with full transparency, that the Nouméa Accord is being implemented and to formulate a view on the process under way, with respect to the inclusion of New Caledonia on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The delegation was thus given the opportunity to hear from all political movements and to receive an explanation of the work and functioning of the special administrative commissions, although it was unable to attend their meetings because they are not public.

15. According to the administering Power, if the electorate is considered to be "frozen" as from 8 November 1998, the question is whether voters should, in the absence of a supplementary roll, be deemed to meet the requirement of continuity and duration of residence in New Caledonia only if they appear on the general electoral roll for 1998, or whether they should merely be required to produce proof of any sort, not only registration on the general electoral roll, that they were residents as at 8 November 1998. The administering Power indicates that political groups are divided on this issue. In response to requests that some voters be stricken from the rolls, the administering Power considered that registration on the general electoral roll for 1998 was not a prerequisite for inclusion on the special electoral roll for the provincial elections. On 25 February 2014, replying to a question from French National Assembly member Sonia Lagarde, the then Prime Minister, Mr. Jean-Marc Ayrault, said that the condition of residence in New Caledonia in 1998 should be carefully verified through consultation of the general electoral roll for 1998 or any other evidence. The non-inclusion of certain Kanak voters is due to the failure of the persons concerned to take the necessary action. In fact, no voters except those who have recently reached voting age can be registered automatically.

16. In the light of this situation, the administering Power reports that the composition of the special electoral roll for elections to Congress and the provincial assemblies is being challenged by UC. The pro-independence movement complains that the roll excludes many Kanak voters and includes some voters who are not listed in the general electoral roll for 1998. Such challenges have taken the form of collective appeals filed by UC on behalf of 1,656 Melanesian voters who have not taken action to register individually. In the absence of such action, these appeals have been systematically rejected. In addition, the pro-independence movement has asked the special administrative commissions that conduct the annual review of the

special electoral roll for the congressional and provincial elections to deregister some 5,638 voters whose names appear on this roll but not on the general electoral roll for 1998. According to the administering Power, after the special administrative commissions rejected these requests on the ground that the movement, as complainant, did not produce sufficient evidence to support its claims, UC turned to the judicial system, which has overwhelmingly rejected these appeals on the same grounds.

17. Finally, the administering Power indicates that the special electorate for the referendum on full sovereignty includes those persons who may vote in the referendum on full sovereignty provided for in section 5 of the Nouméa Accord. While the conditions for inclusion in that electorate are set forth in article 218 of the Organic Law of 19 March 1999, the roll itself has not yet been drawn up. This electorate, which does not fully coincide with the special electorate for congressional and provincial elections, is to include, inter alia, persons having taken up residence in New Caledonia before 31 December 1994, persons having or previously having had customary civil status, and persons born in New Caledonia whose property and personal ties are mainly in the Territory. Following the twelfth meeting of the Committee of Signatories, held on 3 and 4 October 2014, the administering Power, at the request of the parties in New Caledonia, explored the possibility of amending the Organic Law so as to allow the automatic registration of certain categories of voters on the special electoral roll. The administering Power has also proposed the addition of a second magistrate within each special administrative commission in order to strengthen impartiality, as well as the establishment of a single authority with responsibility for providing legal clarifications to the various special administrative commissions. These proposals are currently being discussed between the administering Power and the political forces of New Caledonia.

II. Budget

18. The administering Power reports that the Territory's financial situation has deteriorated since 2012, with the result that it faces the need both to ensure its own financial stability, following a decline in revenues, and to participate more actively in economic recovery.

19. Thanks in part to the tightening of limits on its general recurrent expenses (-1.5 per cent) and transfers (-5 per cent), New Caledonia was able to increase its investment by 18 per cent compared to 2013 levels, thereby meeting the financing needs for its main investment project, the construction of the Médipôle hospital, while maintaining a high level of investment in key areas: school renovation, road investment and updates to aviation infrastructure.

20. The administering Power reports that, for 2015, New Caledonia has announced its intention to begin restoring its capacity for self-financing, which had weakened in 2013 and 2014, in order to be able to continue to fulfil its commitments to financial partners and remain one of the engines of economic growth through its investments. Under the current budget, it is to embark on a multi-year plan to streamline its recurrent expenditure by exploring avenues for sharing. Also envisaged is a package of economic and fiscal reforms under a shared agenda involving employers and employees, political groups in the Congress and local government to generate additional revenues of its own to meet medium-term financing needs.

21. This agenda, adopted at a conference on economic, social and tax matters held in late August 2014, includes a tax component that was implemented at the end of December 2014 through the adoption of several pieces of legislation establishing new taxes (the New Caledonian solidarity contribution, an additional contribution for corporate taxpayers and reform of the withholding tax on securities income). The aim of these taxes is to provide New Caledonia with approximately 10 billion CFP francs in new revenues, which is the amount deemed necessary to ensure the sustainability of social programmes and restore balanced budgets in New Caledonia.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

22. According to the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat, New Caledonia has one of the richest economies of all the Pacific islands, with a gross domestic product per capita estimated at $34,262 in 2014 (estimate provided by the administering Power). This is largely owing to the preponderance of nickel mining and processing in the island's economy. Nickel production accounts for over 90 per cent of total export earnings. There are significant geographic disparities in income distribution, however, as the South Province accounts for 85 per cent of total household income, the North Province for 11.1 per cent and the Loyalty Islands Province for only 3.9 per cent. The economy is also highly dependent on transfer payments from the French Government. Approximately 80 per cent of those payments are spent on health care, education and civil service salaries, as well as on development projects, mainly in the North and Loyalty Islands Provinces. The Territory runs a significant structural trade deficit.

23. According to the administering Power, New Caledonia has enjoyed steady growth over the past decade. The standard of living in the Territory is now comparable to that in the vast majority of France's regions and is close to that in New Zealand, which itself is the second highest in the Pacific region, after Australia. This momentum has been sustained through the construction of major infrastructure, including the Goro and Koniambo metallurgical plants. Since mid-2011, the New Caledonian economy has experienced a slowdown, in a difficult international environment. This slowdown has multiple causes that vary across different sectors of activity.

B. Mineral resources

24. New Caledonia, with an estimated 15 to 25 per cent of the world's nickel reserves, is the second largest source of that metal. Cobalt is also mined commercially, and deposits of iron, copper and gold have been discovered. Mining is carried out by about a dozen operators, the largest of which are Société Le Nickel, Nickel Mining Company and Vale New Caledonia. The other operators are small-scale miners who may or may not be owners of mining claims and gravitate around the major companies. In 2013, New Caledonia was the source of about 6 per cent, or 160,000 tons, of the total volume of nickel mined worldwide. Of that amount, 60,000 tons are exported and 100,000 tons are processed in the Territory. New Caledonia processed 70,000 tons of metal in 2013, accounting for only 3.5 per cent

of world production. According to the administering Power, this share is expected to increase with the entry into full operation of the Koniambo plant in the North Province and the Goro plant in the South Province. The administering Power predicts that the effects of the upturn in nickel prices in 2014 will not be fully apparent in New Caledonia until 2015, as the poor performance of mining and metallurgy in 2013 led to a shortfall of tax revenue for the Territory in 2014. Beginning in 2015, tax revenues from this sector are expected to rise. Employment in mining and metallurgy increased by 7 per cent over a 12-month period, amounting to an estimated 7,200 people in the third quarter of 2014 (including those employed in related activities such as contractors, ore transporters and temporary workers).

C. Construction and manufacturing

25. The construction and public works sector accounted for an average of 10 per cent of the wealth generated over the period 2001-2009, and employed some 9 per cent of wage labour in the Territory in 2013. After several years of sustained growth, this sector is suffering as a result of the completion of major projects and the slowdown in new housing construction. Construction of social housing remains extremely inadequate to cover estimated needs. Against this backdrop, wage employment in the construction sector shrank by 3.1 per cent in 2013, after shrinking by 4.7 per cent in 2012. The outlook for this sector is brightening, however, as the law on local tax relief has buoyed the intermediate housing construction sector since 1 January 2014.

26. Industry (other than metallurgy) is largely focused on machinery and equipment installation and repair, processing of foodstuffs, and manufacturing (of textiles and clothing in particular). Strong growth in this sector, which in 2009 accounted for 6 per cent of wealth creation and 5 per cent of wage employment (excluding mining and energy), has been driven primarily by the creation of one-person businesses, which make up 80 per cent of the industrial base in New Caledonia. The development of the manufacturing sector is faced with high investment and production costs owing to the small size of the local market and the island status of the Territory, which raises the cost of inputs. To address these handicaps, the local authorities have launched a proactive policy to protect local production (imposition of bans or quotas on certain imports, and tariff protection) and offer tax incentives (preferential tax treatment of imports of investment goods and raw materials).

D. Agriculture and fisheries

27. Although the primary sector (excluding mining) represents less than 2 per cent of wealth generation and wage employment (with 1,650 wage earners at the beginning of 2014), it is nonetheless the principal activity of much of the rural population. According to 2012 data, there are some 4,500 farms and a family farming population of about 13,200 in the Territory. Agriculture, livestock and fisheries thus continue to constitute a subsistence economy, although the useful agricultural area is gradually shrinking (by one quarter in 10 years) and the development of the nickel industry and urbanization around these new employment hubs are absorbing part of the agricultural workforce. Cattle-raising on the west coast (mostly by farmers of European descent), pig farming and the export of venison and fish products to Europe are the most

important cash-producing agricultural activities. Three types of fishing are practised in the Territory, depending on the area concerned: lagoon fishing, coastal fishing and pelagic fishing. According to the administering Power, New Caledonia is not self-sufficient in most agricultural and livestock sectors, and thus remains heavily dependent on imports.

E. Transport and communications

28. The transport and telecommunications sector accounts for 8 per cent of the value added in the Territory (based on 2009 figures), 6 per cent of wage employment (as of late 2013) and 4.4 per cent of registered companies. The Territory has a good road system in and around Nouméa. The road infrastructure in the rest of the Territory is more basic, but gradually continues to improve. New Caledonia has about 5,000 km of roads, of which about half are surfaced. Port activity in New Caledonia is organized around the infrastructure of the Autonomous Port of New Caledonia, based in Nouméa (France's tenth-ranked port and first-ranked overseas port); some secondary ports operated primarily in connection with nickel exploitation (in Grande Terre) and passenger traffic between the islands; and marinas, mainly in greater Nouméa. Overseas cargo shipping (inbound and outbound) is predominantly through Nouméa. The total volume of goods loaded and unloaded, apart from nickel ore, amounted to 3 million tons in 2013. The Autonomous Port also handles 7.7 million tons of nickel ore, of which 4.5 million tons are exported, while the rest consists of ore shipped to Doniambo from mining centres. Container shipping is relatively stable, with just under 100,000 containers loaded, unloaded or trans-shipped. With 3,200 trans-shipments, the Autonomous Port serves as a regional hub, as 90 per cent of the goods trans-shipped remain within the Pacific region (Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu for the most part).

29. Since 1 January 2000, New Caledonia has had authority over international traffic rights and air carrier operational programmes. Powers in the area of policing and security in respect of air traffic were transferred, for domestic traffic only, on 1 January 2013. The New Caledonia Air Services Agency, a public enterprise of New Caledonia, is responsible for ensuring the continuity of air services. To this end, it owns 99.38 per cent of the shares in the airline Air Calédonie International (Aircalin). Five international companies operate regular flights to the Territory. In 2013, 475,000 passengers (arrivals and departures) were registered at Nouméa-La Tontouta International Airport. Frequent international flights link Nouméa's airport with neighbouring countries and with Japan, the United States of America and Europe. There are regular services from the Nouméa-Magenta domestic airport to the outer islands and major towns on the main island. The second phase of the 100-million-euro renovation of Nouméa-La Tontouta International Airport (for which 12 million euros were provided by the administering Power) was completed in the first quarter of 2013. A new master plan for the airport was approved in June 2013. It will enable the airport to process 1.5 million passengers by 2030, including 600,000 passengers on domestic flights. The Territory-wide modernization of the transport system is also reflected by the development of a conceptual framework for transport for the period up to 2025, focusing on the complementarity and coherence of all modes of transport.

30. Regarding domestic service, New Caledonia has 14 airfields open to public air traffic. Domestic public transport services are provided by three companies. The

Nouméa-Magenta airport, through which half of domestic traffic passes, has recorded more than 392,000 passengers (arrivals and departures). The Loyalty Islands airfields handle 77 per cent of the remaining domestic passenger traffic (excluding Nouméa-Magenta). It should also be noted that a third cargo vessel has been put into operation, and work has begun on a project to build new port infrastructure on the island of Ouvéa.

31. The telecommunications sector includes the territorial operator, the Post and Telecommunications Office of New Caledonia, and its partners (Internet service providers, the mobile telephone company Mobilis and content providers). A submarine cable network connection between the Territory and Australia, brought into service in 2008, has significantly increased the Territory's network capacity. In recent years, Internet facilities and usage have grown rapidly. Between January 2013 and March 2014, mobile Internet traffic, for example, increased by 40 per cent, reaching a total of more than 44,000 customers. According to the administering Power, the supply of such services will be supplemented in February 2015 through the launch of 4G service in the Territory. The stated goal is to further reduce the digital divide and facilitate Internet traffic. The work under way to set up new cell towers should increase coverage to 85 per cent of the Territory by January 2016.

F. Tourism and environment

32. In the view of the administering Power, New Caledonia, with its geographical location and cultural richness, has real strengths and considerable tourism potential that has not yet been fully tapped. Tourism is thus key to the Territory's economic development. The tourism sector accounts for just over 2 per cent of gross domestic product (about $208 million) and 5,500 jobs. According to the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, 107,750 tourists travelled to New Caledonia in 2013, compared to 112,200 in 2012, representing a decrease of 4,450 tourists (4 per cent). This downturn is due mainly to the reduction in tourism from Japan (-10 per cent) and Australia (-11 per cent) and the decline in business travel. Metropolitan France remains the primary source of tourist arrivals (almost 40,000), ahead of Australia and Japan. New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Canada and Europe are the other main source markets. The cruise-ship market is growing briskly: 400,000 cruise-ship passengers visited New Caledonia in 2014, compared to fewer than 100,000 in 2008. The administering Power forecasts that such arrivals will reach 1 million by 2020. Cruise-ship activity mostly benefits Nouméa and the Isle of Pines, and to a lesser extent the islands of Lifou and Maré.

33. The administering Power indicates that New Caledonia has a unique natural heritage characterized by a high rate of endemism, in particular among plants (76 per cent); striking land ecosystems (rainforest, maquis shrubland), some of which are particularly endangered (dry forest); and the second largest coral reef in the world after Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Recognized internationally as a global biodiversity hotspot, the Territory has now been doubly distinguished by the inclusion, in July 2008, of "Lagoons of New Caledonia: reef diversity and associated ecosystems" on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List and by the inclusion, in February 2014, of the lakes of the South Province of Grande Terre on the list of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat.

34. The various threats to such biodiversity have attracted the attention of non-governmental organizations such as Conservation International. In a February 2011 report, that organization expressed concern over the negative impact of nickel mining and deforestation on the unique flora and fauna of New Caledonia. The Territory is ranked second among the world's 10 most threatened forest hotspots: it has lost 95 per cent of its original forest cover. Deforestation also threatens many endemic species, including various plants and birds. For example, the kagu (*Rhynochetos jubatus*) is the only surviving member of the bird family *Rhynochetidae*, and probably the most well-known of the Territory's native birds. New Caledonia is also home to one of the world's largest geckos, the New Caledonian giant gecko (*Rhacodactylus leachianus*).

35. According to the administering Power, biodiversity conservation is now at the heart of government concerns. Various actions are being taken by the three provinces, which have authority over environmental matters, and by the Government of New Caledonia in the exclusive economic zone: implementation of sustainable strategies for the management and conservation of iconic species (dugong, kagu) and heritage ecosystems (including dry forests); and establishment of a New Caledonia nature reserve to coordinate actions among the various partners involved (government and civil society) in three priority areas, identified as UNESCO World Heritage sites, dry forests and the control of invasive alien species. The establishment of a network of terrestrial and marine protected areas is also one of the tools used by government authorities to protect the natural heritage. Protected areas have been established at the provincial level, and the Natural Park of the Coral Sea was established in 2014. It covers the entire area under the jurisdiction of New Caledonia, or 1.3 million km^2.

36. Moreover, regulations established in New Caledonia (the Mining Code in 2009 and provincial environmental codes starting in 2010) will henceforth strictly regulate mining activity and its impacts on the natural and human environment. Among other things, these regulations impose rigorous requirements in terms of good practices and compensatory measures. Furthermore, the Nickel Fund, which was established in 2009, allows for the gradual rehabilitation of sites impacted by past mining activity.

IV. Social conditions

A. General

37. United Nations Development Programme data for New Caledonia show that the Territory has a high human development index. The adult literacy rate is over 96 per cent and school enrolment (all levels) is about 89 per cent. Nevertheless, according to the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, the Territory suffers from inequalities and imbalances in several areas, including the social and economic spheres. Approximately 74.4 per cent of the population is concentrated in the South Province. Including the suburbs of Nouméa, the Greater Nouméa metropolitan area is home to 67 per cent of the population. The population density in the South Province is 23.4 inhabitants per km^2 (999.7 inhabitants per km^2 in Nouméa), compared to only 4.6 inhabitants per km^2 in the North Province and 11.1 inhabitants per km^2 in the Loyalty Islands Province.

38. It is also estimated that, among the population aged 14 years or over, 66 per cent of those living in the North and Loyalty Islands Provinces have no educational qualifications, compared to 35 per cent of those living in the South Province.

39. Following demonstrations against the high cost of living in May 2011, a special committee was established in the Congress to draft economic and social agreements and to monitor their implementation. Following an initial agreement between the members of Congress and a federation of labour unions formed to protest the high cost of living, signed in June 2012 in the presence of the High Commissioner, and the general strike called by the unions as a result of dissatisfaction with the agreement's implementation, a new protocol was signed on 27 May 2013. In August 2014, a conference on economic, social and tax matters organized by the new Government of New Caledonia, in which the administering Power and workers' and employers' organizations participated, resulted in the signing of an agreement setting out a shared agenda of economic and fiscal policies that the New Caledonia Government undertook to implement. According to the administering Power, among the causes of the 16 December 2014 collapse of the Government led by Cynthia Ligeard were the divisions among the majority political groups on the nature of the tax measures taken under the shared agenda. At the same time, the previous High Commissioner entered into negotiations with the banks with a view to reducing bank fees. An initial agreement on this matter was reached on 23 December 2013. A second agreement on the continuation of those efforts was signed on 15 December 2014.

40. The concept of economic rebalancing is rooted in the 1998 Nouméa Accord and in the aim of achieving a more harmonious distribution of job and wealth creation throughout New Caledonia in preparation for the Territory's potential accession to full sovereignty. This concept led to the development of a formula for budgetary allocations that proactively favours the North and Loyalty Islands Provinces in terms of their demographic weight and the imbalances to be corrected. It has also resulted in the development of the Voh-Koné-Pouembout area of the North Province and the establishment of a nickel plant in that province.

41. Fifteen years after the Nouméa Accord, the centrepiece of the rebalancing initiative is the Koniambo Nickel SAS plant in Vavouto, municipality of Voh, which came on stream more than a year ago. With the support of the administering Power, the 1998 Bercy Accords gave the North Province control over the resources of the Koniambo massif by giving it a majority stake (51 per cent) in a joint venture with the company Glencore for the construction of a plant in the North Province. Glencore's expertise and financial resources have made it possible to implement the project. The objective is to produce 60,000 tons of ferronickel per year by 2016 or 2017; the massif's reserves should be sufficient to keep the plant in operation for 25 to 50 years.

42. Once the plant comes into operation, it should employ about 1,000 people directly and close to 1,000 more through subcontractors, the overwhelming majority of which (over 85 per cent) are New Caledonian. To that end, a major training programme in France, Canada and Australia was established more than five years ago by New Caledonia and the North Province, with the support of the administering Power, to facilitate local recruitment and the training of New Caledonian executives and workers.

43. The plant's establishment has triggered significant, rapid development in the Voh-Koné-Pouembout area, with housing and infrastructure development facilitated by the various institutions (North Province, New Caledonia Government, France) through their public policies.

44. The administering Power reports that it contributed to the financing of the North Province plant through tax relief for the power plant (Girardin Act). It has also concluded development contracts with the North Province and municipalities, thereby mobilizing significant resources to assist the northern zone. These subsidies have effectively supported the development of municipalities in the North Province (17 municipalities comprising 199 tribes, which constitute separate villages to be served and administered), and have helped to address shortfalls in terms of so-called primary infrastructure (drinking water, roads, sanitation, miscellaneous public infrastructure). This has enabled a local business base to develop: between 2005 and 2013, the number of local businesses rose from 1,550 to almost 3,000. The population of the Voh-Koné-Pouembout area has doubled in 10 years, reaching 10,000. A further increase to 15,000 is expected by 2015-2020.

45. In the far south, the construction of a metallurgical plant has likewise received support from the administering Power and local authorities. This plant, located in Goro, is operated by the company Vale New Caledonia. An 81-per-cent share of the plant is owned by Vale Canada and a 5-per-cent share is owned by the Société de participation minière du sud calédonien, a holding company belonging to the three provinces. The Goro plant is the only one in the Territory that uses a hydrometallurgical instead of pyrometallurgical process, which makes it possible to exploit low-grade ore. The company employs about 1,260 people.

B. Employment

46. Regional disparities are also clearly evident in the labour market, with the number of unemployed being particularly high in the North Province. Since the Koniambo plant in the North Province gradually began operations in 2012, it has generated some 8,000 new jobs, directly and indirectly, many of them for the local population. The Government of New Caledonia has indicated that it has no statistics confirming high levels of unemployment among Kanaks. In any event, the administering Power reports that remedial action is being taken with respect to rebalancing in this regard. For example, local law (*loi du pays*) No. 2012-9 of 27 July 2010 on the protection and promotion of and support for local employment came into force with the appointment of the members of the Joint Local Employment Board at the beginning of February 2012. The law stipulates that, as a rule, New Caledonian citizens shall be hired. If no citizen is as well qualified as other applicants, the employer must recruit a candidate who can demonstrate a sufficient length of residency.

47. Kanak representatives continue to express concern over the influx of immigrant labour to New Caledonia. The Government of New Caledonia has acknowledged this fact, while specifying that the immigration included highly qualified labour, as well as technicians and managers not available in the domestic labour force. Furthermore, the duration of stay was limited to 18 months for the first category and to four years for the second category. According to the Government of New Caledonia, three quarters of the guest labour force of the nickel plant in the

South Province have already left the Territory; the number of foreign workers at the site is now 129. Such demobilization has also accelerated considerably at the North Province plant, which had 620 long-stay foreign workers in December 2014, compared to almost 4,000 in July 2013.

C. Education

48. The Organic Law of 19 March 1999 transferred control of public primary education to the New Caledonian authorities, giving them the right to adapt the curriculum to local cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including instruction in the Kanak languages. Five agreements were signed in October 2011 between the administering Power and the Government of New Caledonia to organize the transfer of authority over secondary education to the Territory, with the transfer officially taking place on 1 January 2012. Enrolment in New Caledonia's public and contracted private secondary schools stands at 17,800 lower-secondary students in 51 institutions and 10,950 upper-secondary students in 14 institutions and branches.

49. According to the administering Power, the University of New Caledonia (UNC), established in 1999, has the distinction of being a French and European university in the service of development in New Caledonia and beyond the Pacific region. Education at UNC follows the European system (bachelor's degree (*licence*), master's degree and doctorate), which guarantees the quality of the education imparted according to a standard shared by all universities in the European space. With respect to research, the uniting of the relevant entities (UNC and research institutions in New Caledonia) around a shared scientific and technological vision laid the foundation for the establishment of the Research, Higher Education and Innovation Consortium in New Caledonia in October 2014. The University's research activities are geared to meeting the major challenges of sustainable development in New Caledonia: the study of terrestrial and marine biodiversity and the study of nickel and its environment, in a unique community with a plurality of cultures, oral and written literature and social and political organizations, both traditional and contemporary. UNC has a doctoral college and five research teams. Each year it hosts a number of international students, including students with scholarships from the Government of Vanuatu.

50. The University's higher education policy is structured around the following objectives: (a) effectively supporting development in the Territory and more fully meeting its needs in the area of research and training; and (b) making UNC a touchstone for the learning and development of languages in the Pacific through the establishment of a pilot school for language certification and a language centre.

51. Under the "Cadres for the Future" framework, 1,400 trainees have now been trained and are providing expertise in various communities, governments and enterprises in New Caledonia. Some 70 per cent of these trainees are of Kanak origin. The success rate is high: 95 per cent of the trainees find employment within three months after their return to New Caledonia. Since 2006, the administering Power has maintained its financial commitment at 5,400,000 euros. New Caledonia's share amounts to 500,000 euros. New initiatives have been undertaken, with the identification and training of trainees in the following fields of excellence: (a) public secondary education, with 21 certified New Caledonian teachers, including 14 Kanaks, in four years; from 2010 to 2014, the number of certified

teachers of Kanak origin increased from 29 to 48 in the public sector; (b) medicine and high-level health-sector occupations; (c) the judiciary and legal and judicial occupations; and (d) senior management and, in general, occupations concerning the exercise of sovereign powers.

52. In the field of law enforcement, two important steps have been taken: the establishment of a training centre for volunteer deputy gendarmes in New Caledonia; and the creation of a "cadet of the Republic" training programme by the Ministry of the Interior in partnership with the Ministry of Education, under which young people recruited as security officers can receive the necessary initial training for the discharge of these functions. According to the administering Power, the integration factor is very important, as the system has brought young people from different neighbourhoods, provinces and social environments into the ranks of the police, and the composition of each graduating class is a fairly accurate reflection of the various communities of the Territory. Lastly, a competitive process conducted in New Caledonia in 2014 led to the recruitment of local prison officials.

53. Rebalancing efforts are also being made by the administering Power and the provinces, such as the priority education agreement with the Paris Institute of Political Studies, concluded in 2009, under which 13 students were admitted, including 6 Kanaks, and the establishment of high-quality boarding schools in the North, South and Loyalty Islands Provinces that can accommodate 130 upper-secondary students, 95 per cent of whom are Kanak.

54. Other institutions of higher education and vocational training have also redoubled their efforts over the past 10 years. These include the Health and Human Services Training Institute of New Caledonia, the Teacher Training Institute of New Caledonia and the School of Management and Commerce. There are also three preparatory classes for admission to the French professional schools (*grandes écoles*). The National Conservatory of Applied Arts and Crafts offers continuing education for adults, and admits students, wage-earners and job-seekers.

55. With respect to the social and vocational integration of young people in difficult circumstances, the French army has an adapted military service regiment that provides training in various manual occupations (mechanics, construction, public works, animal husbandry, hospitality, food service) and job placement for approximately 600 young New Caledonians per year. The adapted military service fulfils a social mission within a military framework; it aims to provide a comprehensive response to social exclusion, unemployment, alienation and illiteracy among young people. In view of its success, the programme will be stepped up, particularly in the North Province.

D. Health care

56. According to the most recent World Health Organization country health information profile, New Caledonia has a well-functioning mother and child health programme. However, communicable diseases remain a public health problem and sexually transmitted infections are highly prevalent. Non-communicable diseases constitute a major burden, with cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus and cancers being the most common.

57. According to the administering Power, the incidence of addiction, including the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis, is high in New Caledonia. The administering Power and local authorities have mobilized to coordinate a policy to combat these scourges. In 2012, a comprehensive and ambitious four-year plan called ISA (Inform, Sensitize, Act) was drawn up.

58. The Territory has three public hospitals (492 beds), three private clinics (178 beds) and four specialized hospitals (184 beds), located in Nouméa. The construction of the Médipôle hospital near Nouméa is a major project in the Territory. This hospital is intended to consolidate the sometimes obsolescent facilities of four health-care establishments (the territorial hospital, the Pasteur Institute of New Caledonia, the follow-up care and rehabilitation centre and the cancer treatment centre) into a state-of-the-art health-care hub built on a 20-hectare campus, with strong links to the urban and natural environment. The project concept is based, in particular, on the use of renewable energy sources. The project cost is estimated at some $460 million. Part of this funding is provided by the administering Power in the context of development contracts ($15.7 billion for the period 2011-2015). At the provincial level, integrated public health-care services are provided through 7 social medical centres with 42 hospital beds, 19 medical centres, 14 infirmaries, 55 consultation facilities and 22 dental clinics.

V. Relations with international organizations and partners

59. The Organic Law of 19 March 1999 governs the legal framework within which New Caledonia may establish external relations. New Caledonia has been an associate member of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific since 1992. In 2006, it became an associate member of the Pacific Islands Forum. To give impetus to the Nouméa Accord, New Caledonia intends to become a full member. The administering Power has expressed its full support for that initiative. In the communiqué of the 2010 meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum, the Forum leaders agreed to address the matter following a gradual process coordinated with the secretariat of the Forum. In the final communiqué of the forty-fourth meeting, held in 2013, they endorsed the recommendations made following the July 2013 visit to New Caledonia by a ministerial committee of the Forum. Ways and means of making New Caledonia a member are being sought on the basis of consensus among all members of the Government of New Caledonia. In 2013, at a ceremony held in Nouméa, FLNKS formally began a two-year term as Chair of the Melanesian Spearhead Group.

60. New Caledonia is also a member of the Pacific Community, the oldest regional organization in the Pacific, whose secretariat is located in Nouméa. Other regional arrangements in which New Caledonia is involved include the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, the Pacific Islands Development Forum, the World Health Organization, the Oceania Customs Organization, the Oceania Regional Anti-Doping Organization, the South Pacific Tourism Organization and the Pacific Power Association. Regional cooperation among universities has gained momentum since 2013. For example, the Pacific Islands Universities Research Network, formally established on 10 July 2013, includes 11 Pacific Island universities and aims to contribute in a more structured way to the

training of young professionals and development in the Pacific. It thus represents a genuine regional platform to support public policies.

61. New Caledonia has continued to strengthen its ties with the European Union, with which it holds the status of associated overseas territory as conferred by the Treaty of Rome. The European Commission office for the Pacific overseas countries and territories is based in Nouméa. In January 2012, the French Minister for Cooperation, the French Minister for Overseas Territories and the President of the Government of New Caledonia signed a convention related to the hosting of New Caledonian delegates in the French diplomatic and consular missions in the Pacific. The process of deploying representatives of New Caledonia will continue in 2015.

VI. Position of the administering Power

62. During his visit to New Caledonia from 16 to 18 November 2014, the President of France, Mr. François Hollande, reaffirmed the administering Power's commitment in relation to the future of New Caledonia, the nickel industry, economic and social development and training. With respect to the future of New Caledonia, the President of the Republic reminded elected officials that a referendum among the people of New Caledonia on the question of the Territory's assumption of full sovereignty would take place on a date chosen by the Congress or, if the Congress did not choose a date, by 2018 at the latest. He gave assurances that the choice made by the people of New Caledonia would be respected, and emphasized that preparations must be made and conditions created for ensuring that the solution chosen would be sustainable and would advance development. He also referred to the questions to be asked in the referendum, including the question of citizenship and the exercise of the powers transferred under the Nouméa Accord. The full text of the President's statement is available on the Internet (http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-devant-les-elus-de-nouvelle-caledonie-2/).

63 The twelfth meeting of the Committee of Signatories was held in Paris on 3 October 2014 under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, Mr. Manuel Valls, in the presence of the Minister for Overseas Territories. Union calédonienne did not participate, citing the absence of clear answers from the administering Power, including on the issue of the electoral rolls. Senator Pierre Frogier (Rassemblement-UMP) left the deliberations prematurely.

64. At this twelfth Committee meeting, the Prime Minister commended the efforts in which the New Caledonian people had been engaged for more than 25 years. The administering Power would continue to support New Caledonia as it progressed towards the destiny it would choose in accordance with the Nouméa Accord. The administering Power took the view that its role and responsibility had a single objective: to enable the people of New Caledonia to decide democratically on their future and on the relationship they wished to have with France, while ensuring that the process was transparent and incontestable. The report of the twelfth meeting of the Committee of Signatories is available on the Internet (http://www.gouv.nc/portal/page/portal/gouv/textes_fondamentaux/Releve_conclusions_XIIe_Comite_Signataires.pdf).

65. Following the meeting of the Committee of Signatories, four working groups comprising representatives of all the political groups and the signatories met under the authority of the High Commissioner of the Republic in November and December

2014 to discuss the establishment of the special electoral roll for the referendum on accession to full sovereignty, the Territory's institutional future, the transfer of powers and issues related to nickel. At these meetings, the participants agreed on a method of work and a calendar of discussions for 2015.

VII. Consideration of the question by the United Nations

A. Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

66. At the Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: accelerating action, held in Nadi, Fiji, from 21 to 23 May 2014, the representative of the administering Power provided information regarding its support for the process of decolonization of New Caledonia over the last 25 years, particularly in the areas of realignment of the provinces, investment in social housing and training for the people. Two experts from New Caledonia and a representative of FLNKS also participated in the seminar.

67. At the 9th meeting of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, held on 27 June 2014, the representative of the administering Power stressed that France had consistently maintained that the United Nations should be informed of the progress of the process envisaged in the Nouméa Accord. To that end, France had decided many years earlier to cooperate with the Special Committee and would continue to do so. The representative also highlighted her country's regular and cordial engagement with the Chair and the Bureau of the Special Committee and with the Decolonization Unit of the Secretariat's Department of Political Affairs. In her view, the March 2014 visiting mission to New Caledonia had been successful and had allowed the Special Committee to see for itself the preparations being made for the provincial elections and to take stock of the progress achieved in the implementation of the final phase of the Nouméa process. The Special Committee's work should contribute to the process of further reflection by New Caledonian society on its options for the future, in a peaceful environment. France, as a participant in the Nouméa process, acted to facilitate dialogue among the various components of New Caledonian society, without seeking to replace them.

68. At the same meeting, the Special Committee heard a number of petitioners, including the President of the Congress of New Caledonia, the representative of the High Commissioner, the head of the UC-FLNKS et nationalistes group in the Congress of New Caledonia and the representative of FLNKS (see A/AC.109/2014/SR.9).

69. Also at that meeting, the Special Committee adopted a draft resolution on the question of New Caledonia, introduced by the representative of Papua New Guinea (A/AC.109/2014/L.12).

B. Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

70. At the Fourth Committee's meeting of 8 October 2014, the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea, speaking also on behalf of the countries members of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, emphasized in particular the positive results of the Special Committee's visit to New Caledonia and Paris from 9 to 18 March 2014 and welcomed the regular monitoring of the issue at the highest level by the French authorities. He called on the parties to work together to address concerns about the complexity of the electoral system in order to ensure that the conduct of the final referendum or referendums would be transparent, inclusive and fair. The President of the Government of New Caledonia, who had been invited in her capacity as the leader of a Non-Self-Governing Territory, outlined her overall policy agenda. In particular, she stressed that the institutional future of New Caledonia could be built only through the dialogue that had been called for and launched 20 years earlier by the Nouméa Accord. She also referred to the importance of the coming period, urging all parties to show more responsibility, pragmatism and goodwill to avoid the pitfalls of radicalization and to complete the process of reconciliation. Efforts to build the future of New Caledonia could not exclude any of the parties or pit them against each other. Three petitioners made statements at that meeting: the head of the UC-FLNKS et nationalistes group, the President of the Union calédonienne and the representative of Calédonie ensemble (see A/C.4/69/SR.3).

C. Action taken by the General Assembly

71. On 5 December 2014, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 69/102 based on the report of the Special Committee transmitted to the Assembly (A/69/23) and its subsequent consideration by the Fourth Committee.